

SUFFERING THE CONSEQUENCES

By Stephen McNamara ([Website](#), [Twitter](#))



Source: The White House, [Wikimedia](#) (Public Domain)

I think it is more than fair to say that so many governments around the world have screwed up their responses to the 2019 variant of a coronavirus. So bad in fact that they have damaged the human population far more than the viruses ever could. There was a phrase making the rounds in the first half of 2020: "Some of you may suffer - we'll make sure everyone does." – Government (paraphrased). Yet, for some very odd reason, when an election came round, the restrictions were conveniently lifted, and victory chants started only for the same governments to be re-elected and the restrictions imposed yet again. When the polls showed the different government's popularity falling drastically, they opted for a new phrase: "Learn to live with it." I hate to be the bearer of bad news to everyone who copied this chant but, believe it or not, the human population was already living with viruses before the government came to "save" us! The only lesson here was that we should never trust any government ever. Period.

I was asked to write this piece about the continued effect that these restrictions and regulation changes have had over the last couple of years, so I have a few stories from businesses and self-employed people who were affected. The first is of a self-employed van man. He was quite excited when he was given a £10,000 grant from the taxes taken by the government. He was so excited that he immediately went out and bought a brand-new Rolex watch and took a three-week holiday, sitting at home with all the time in the world and nothing to do. He posted regularly to social media and was very critical of those who dared to warn him about the risk of hyper-inflation that the government policy of handing out all this cash to so many people would have. One of his largest day-to-day expenses is diesel fuel – and we all know how hyper-inflation is affecting drivers now...

The next small business sold music to pubs and nightclubs. The pubs and nightclubs were forced to close, with very little cash spared to help those owners pay their ongoing expenses. Overnight, nearly eighty per cent of this small business' customers went to the wall. Gone. Permanently. Eventually, when the surviving pubs were permitted to reopen, they were banned from playing any kind of music for over a year. The small business selling music services was left with zero customers, hundreds of thousands of pounds of contracts which turned into debt and the owners have spent the last two years desperately restructuring their business model to sell to customers not linked to the pub trade whilst

simultaneously trying to negotiate and pay off the contractors and licence fees. Even today, they are still struggling to survive but are starting to see the stage lights at the end of the backstage corridor.

The third story comes from a self-employed burger van owner. He told of choosing to close as he was worried about his and his family's health, especially as a couple of the family members had existing health concerns and they felt the need to shield. The tiny grants being offered were liable to full tax as if it was one hundred per cent profit, yet, as the family also qualified for Universal Credit, they would be offset by the grant, meaning that the family would ultimately be roughly £200 worse off for taking the grant than if they didn't! Far too many people were in this type of situation and took the cash on offer without checking the small print and are now finding out the hard way.



Source: Claireneon, [Wikimedia](#) (CC BY-SA 4.0)

These government policies have done far more harm than they ever could have helped anyone. We are now, as predicted, all suffering the consequences.

I TOLD YOU SO

By Mike Swadling ([Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Gettr](#))

A recent appearance on the [LibertariDan Live podcast this week](#) got me thinking whether it's the inefficiency of lockdown, the pointlessness of masks, money printing leading to inflation, windmills making us less energy secure or government overspending that's making us all poorer. Right now, libertarians have a lot of reasons to say, "I told you so".



Source: Mike Swadling (used with permission)

Now normally the level of smugness associated with saying "I told you so" is reserved for Remoaners, who misunderstand the reasons people wanted to leave the EU and is best avoided. But right now, in one particular area, I really feel we need to point it out.

At the fall of the Berlin Wall, Francis Fukuyama famously suggested we were witnessing the 'End of History'. If that were in any way true, the 'End of History' ended when Russian tanks rolled into the Ukraine. Kiev, arguably the father of Russia, first became part of the Russian Empire in 1667, a bookend to a four-hundred-year fight to unite the Rus following their forced separation at the hands of the Mongol horde. Those four hundred years changed Ukraine and created a closely related but separate nation.

Putin's invasion of Russia was the act of a dictator. Democracies tend not to (if ever) go to war with each other. Disputes about sovereignty, no matter how fraught the circumstances, are resolved peacefully. Norway split from Sweden, the Czech Republic and Slovakia split, the UK left the EU all peacefully. Whilst the separation of what is now the Republic of Ireland from the United Kingdom can hardly be called peaceful, it was relatively so compared to say the breakup of Yugoslavia or the wars fought since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Being a liberal democracy is a good thing. Being a dictatorship of whatever political bent is a bad thing. Living in a dictatorship is likely to limit your life choices, your economic prosperity, and your life expectancy. For all its ills we should be proud of the system of government we have, and we should be able to shout about how much better it is to the system of government in say Russia. Except, of course, those of you who have read this far and are thinking – *but we've not in almost anyway been a liberal democracy for the past two years*. Yes, I agree, and this is why we have to say, "I told you so".

With the banning of RT (formerly Russia Today) across much of the West, the cancelling of Tchaikovsky in Cardiff, and the banning sports stars, the West can't hold itself as a paragon of virtue against the dictatorship in Russia. We are playing into the hands of Putin's propagandists. Those of us who believe in liberty should be shouting from the rooftop, "I told you so".

I told you when you cancel those you disagree with, you provide no defence against Russian propaganda. When you cancel RT, you give them an excuse to cancel the (however imperfect) Western media. When you don't provide a platform for even the most unappealing voice in your society, you give the dictators an excuse to dismiss you. When you lock up your citizens for peaceful protest, they can unashamedly lock up theirs. When you are not even aspiring to be a shining city on a hill, you arguably give dictators the moral cover to invade their neighbours.



Source: Silar, [Wikimedia \(CC BY-SA 4.0\)](#)



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Would cancelling cancel culture have stopped Putin invading the Ukraine? Probably not, but would it have been harder to invade had the West upheld its principles and its economies these past two years? Yes!

Rather than cancelling RT, why not pillory it in the same we did Ali Hassan Abd al-Majid al-Tikriti (also known as Chemical Ali) who ultimately received the death sentence for genocide and was hanged. The BNP fell when their leader appeared on Question Time and people could see them for what they are. As a child it felt like every other comedy programme was someone mocking the Nazis, good. Today merely mentioning them, even to criticise, is by some be considered beyond the pale.

With the quick feedback loops of a war, "I told you so" becomes a powerful argument as the protagonists suppressed intellectual freedoms in the same way as the woke mob here. History didn't end with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The world isn't full of just good people; many are bad. Only with a united stand for freedom will our side, the good guys, win.

Incidentally, if you haven't already watched LibertariDan's podcast, [look out for it on his Facebook page](#).

SUNAK'S STATEMENT SPELLS DISASTER

By Christopher J. Wilkinson ([Website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Telegram](#), [MeWe](#))

This week, incompetence met inconstancy as political observers and economists were treated to Rishi Sunak's latest mid-year fiscal statement. While the rhetoric was unashamedly positive, the reality is set to be unbearably bleak for many individuals and families.

The background could hardly be worse – [at 8.2 per cent RPI inflation](#) is at its highest level since March 1991, [a real terms reduction in wages](#) has heralded a new cost of living crisis, a [slowdown in economic growth](#) has cast doubts on the strength of the recovery, and [there's talk of COVID-style interventionism in the energy market](#) as the Invasion of Ukraine has exposed Britain's chronic dependency on imported fuels. Unlike the three-day week of 1973, the lights will stay on... but only if you can afford it. The mass of tax increases, especially regarding Corporation Tax and the freezing of many tax thresholds, represents [an unwinding of previous Conservatives' manifesto commitments](#) and is likely to erode 'true blue' support in England at the next election.

[Despite raising more revenues than ever before](#), our not-so-Conservative government seems bent on making the pips squeak across all incomes, rich and poor alike. The basic rate of Income Tax is to be reduced from twenty per cent to nineteen per cent in 2024, seemingly designed to pepper that year's general election campaign rather than alleviating financial hardship faced by individuals and families. The most striking element of this measure was in the millionaire Chancellor's sheer hubris – ['fully costed and fully paid for in the plans announced today' he declared](#) as the nation's [budget deficit sits above £165 billion in the year to February](#), yet costs are mounting now – not in the next two years. Servicing Britain's national debt [now costs every individual more than £1,200 with annual interest payments soaring to an eye-watering £84 billion](#). Five pennies off fuel duty [won't substantially cut the cost of motoring when prices at the pumps have never been higher](#).

The Chancellor claimed the increase in the National Insurance threshold from £9,568 to £12,570 this July [represented a £6 billion tax cut for 30 million people](#), yet the British taxpayer [is staring down the gun barrel of the highest tax burden since the 1940s](#) and [the worst reduction in real living standards since records first began in the 1950s](#). All this to finance a grossly inefficient, ineffective, over-regulated, and over-legislated [public sector now costing over £1 trillion each year](#). This same public sector has over the past two years of COVID denied healthcare to scores of patients many of whom with serious conditions, left children for months without an education they're only now catching up on, and unduly politicised the police and criminal justice system in a way that made McCarthyism look comparatively sane and rational. Where did our money go? What was it spent on? The time is certainly ripe for a swinging of the axe.

In the worst recession in three hundred years and with the biggest peacetime budget deficit in British history, Rishi Sunak's economic plan won't be a recipe for the Conservative's aim of 'Building Back Better' – instead it is the next instalment in a pro-state, pro-government borrowing binge that started three decades ago under the Major administration and which continues to this day. Under authoritarian governments of all political colours, the notion of all pain and no gain rings very true indeed.

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